

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 16 to 36 remain pending in the application. Claims 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, and 36 are independent.

Rejections

Claims 16, 19, 20, 23, 26, 27, 30, 33, and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,671,277 (Ikenoue).

Claims 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over Ikenoue in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,281,998 (Douglas).

Claims 22, 29, and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Ikenoue and Douglas.

The rationale underlying each of the rejections is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Comments

The present invention generally relates to an image processing apparatus comprising a printer, a loading unit and a detachable storage medium. In one aspect, as

recited in independent Claim 16, the printer prints an image on a recording sheet based on image data, the loading unit receives the detachable storage medium, where the detachable storage medium has stored therein image data and sheet processing information, and a controller controls the printer so as to print an image on the recording sheet based on objective image data stored in the detachable storage medium in accordance with the sheet processing information stored with the objective image data in the detachable storage medium loaded in the loading unit.

Independent claims 22, 23, 29, 30 and 36 variously recite similar features with respect to an image processing apparatus, method(s) and recording media.

The present invention is characterized, in the case where sheet processing information is stored in a detachable storage medium together with image data, by printing the image based on the image data in accordance with the stored sheet processing information. The sheet processing information in the present invention is information that defines how to treat the recording sheet on which the image is recorded (for example, to print the image on both sides of recording sheet, or to staple the recording sheet after printing the image on the recording sheets).

The Ikenoue "277 patent relates to an image forming apparatus and copy management system for preventing unauthorized copying of documents and for tracking copying of such documents. Each time a hard copy of a controlled document is copied, "additional data" indicating such is embedded in the hard copy and also forwarded to a management unit for tracking. Each time such a hard copy is read, an analysis of the embedded "additional data" is performed. An exemplary system (Fig. 1) includes a floppy

disk reader for reading a floppy disk 104, an image processor 100 and a management unit 200. The image processor 100 is understood to include a controller for controlling processing, including printing. Data entered from the floppy disk 104 enters through an interface 112 to a buffer 113, from which it is analyzed. The data entering the buffer 112 has a predetermined format, as shown in Fig. 19, including image data and “additional data”; the image data includes “format” data, “position” data, character codes and figure codes. However, the “format” data and “position” data are understood to relate only to the character codes and figure codes of the image data for one hard copy page (see, Fig. 32 and corresponding written description at col. 17, lines 38 to 61). Nowhere is the Ikenoue ‘277 patent understood to disclose or suggest the feature of a detachable storage medium having stored therein image data and *multiple* sheet processing information, such as sorting information, stapling information, and single/duplex printing information, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. That is, Applicants submit that the stored “format” and “position” information disclosed in Ikenoue, is patentably distinct from the sheet processing information disclosed and claimed in the present application.

The Douglas ‘998 patent relates to scheduling color variations for discrete job elements, and discloses a system including a memory for storing electronic images with color mode marks and a control for providing images in optional color modes for producing a set of images processed in a selected color mode independent of the color mode of other elements. The Douglas ‘998 patent further discloses a system in which job information is prerecorded on, e.g., on a computer tape or disc, and then communicated to the system processor, e.g., to perform a printing job. The job information includes job

parameters specifying the xerographic mode and format for the job. "In other words, this could be parameters identifying . . . whether or not a particular sheet or sheets are to be in a simplex or duplex mode." (See, Fig. 3 and col. 3, lines 40 to 54). However, nowhere is the Douglas '998 patent understood to disclose or suggest the feature of a detachable recording media including image data and sheet processing information, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Nor is the Douglas '998 patent understood to add anything to the Ikenoue '277 patent that would make obvious the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 16, 22, 23, 29, 30 and 36 are allowable over the cited art whether taken individually or in combination.

Dependent Claims

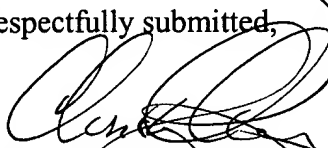
Claims 17 to 21, 24 to 28 and, 31 to 35 depend on Claims 16, 23 and 30, respectively, and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicants' invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusions

It is respectfully submitted that the claims on file are allowable over the art of record, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

If there is any reason precluding the allowance of the application, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact Applicants' attorney.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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